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REVIVALISM AND THE GERMAN CHURCHES IN PENNSYLVANIA, 1783-1816

A PART OF A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE DIVINITY SCHOOL IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF CHURCH HISTORY
1933

By
PAUL HIMMEL ELLER

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CHAPTER X

REVIVALISM AMONG THE GERMANS

No state was more truly American than Pennsylvania. Her citizens were of diverse racial stocks; geographically she was between the north and south while she combined in herself east and west. Her transportation facilities tended to bring north, south, east, and west together. Even the traveler "lost the acuteness of his sectionalism on the way."[1] These factors together with the establishment of the nation's capitol within its bounds for a decade contributed to make Pennsylvania the focal point of the States. The characteristics of the day are concentrated in this area. Here the German revivalists challenged the current secularism, avarice, impetuosity, individualism, and intolerance to combat.

The Pennsylvania German religious quickening began antecedent to, but was definitely energized by the Great Revival of the West. Manifestations of extraordinary religious movings were apparent in the metropolitan centers[2]—Philadelphia, Lancaster, and Germantown from 1780 to 1788 under the preaching of Helmuth, Schmidt, and H. E. Mühlenberg, men tutored in Halle. With the same dynamic William Otterbein in his own communion essayed to continue a sincere faith. The urban, Halle-stimulated quickening is the threshold for the wider reaches of the revival, which was sponsored by a different ministry.

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[1] Turner, History of the American Frontier, p. 28.

[2] See chap. ii (of the complete dissertation, to be found in the University of Chicago Libraries).

In the very year in which Otterbein left Lancaster, a Mennonite farmer living not far distant was satisfyingly converted. Martin Boehm, the youngest son of a Mennonite elder was by the lot nominated to the ministry, ordained, and made an assistant to Bishop Jacob Hostetter[1]—a task he would gladly have evaded. At the bishop's death in 1761 he was made bishop. The honor of office, however, could not cloak his soul's distress:

> To be a preacher and yet have nothing to preach. While engaged earnestly in prayer . . . . the thought rose . . . . 'You pray for graces to teach others the way to salvation, and you have not prayed for your own salvation.' The word 'lost' went ever around me. One day in the field I could go no farther but sank behind the plow crying 'Lord, save. I am lost' . . . . Like a dream old things passed away, and it seemed as if I had awoke to a new life, new thoughts, new faith, new love. This joy I wished to communicate to those around me.[2]

The task of communication consumed the remaining fifty-four years of his life. Either by direct call,[3] or inner compulsion,[4] he went to Virginia where the Mennonites, well versed in their traditional faith, were perplexed by New Light preachers and wished advice. Following this itinerary into Virginia, there came intermittently into Lancaster County the so-called "Virginia preachers."[5] The experiences of the trip crystallized Boehm's opinions into conclusion:

> We became satisfied that men everywhere must repent, and that this repentance must be accompanied by a godly sorrow, deeply felt; and that there can be no rest, no peace, and no faith without it.[6]

Whitsuntide, 1768, was the occasion of a Great Meeting on

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[1]M. G. Weaver, The Mennonites of Lancaster County, p. 103. Scottdale, 1931.

[2]Spayeth, op. cit., p. 33. Quoted.

[3]J. Lawrence, History of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, I, 162.

[4]Berger, op. cit., p. 72.

[5]Drury, Otterbein, p. 137.

[6]Lawrence, History, I, 37.

John Long's farm. The farmer with his two brothers had been converted under Boehm.[1] As the Mennonite was preaching, Otterbein, the Reformed pastor from York, entered and immediately sensed the joy of fraternity with God's children. Following the service, the two in embrace made common confession, "We are brethren," and a life-long friendship was begun.[2]

In proportion as revival friendships grew, Boehm was suspected of deviation from the Mennonite faith. In 1780 they summarily expelled him because of his expressions,[3] but chiefly because

> We believe he erred in the doctrine of Christ. He had a great deal to do with forming a union and associating with men who allowed themselves to walk on the broad way, preaching warfare and swearing of oaths, both of which are in direct opposition to the truths of the Gospel.[4]

Boehm did coöperate with revivalists who did not scruple at military service, or attestation. A Methodist stopped at his home in 1777; his wife and several children joined the Methodist class. It was "on account of the want of life, and power of life, and religion among them" that Boehm explains his separation.[5]

Expelled from his own church, an independent meeting house was erected on Boehm's farm in 1791 to which revivalists of all kinds rallied. In addition to his ministry here, the meager records reveal frequent trips to the Germans in the Shenandoah Valley. Boehm became the dependable leader of the United Brethren, missing but two of the first ten assemblies.

Boehm with Otterbein won the cordial regard of Asbury.

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[1] Landmarks, op. cit., p. 98.
[2] Drury, History, p. 192.
[3] Funk, Mennonite Church, p. 54.
[4] Ibid., p. 27. Quoted in detail.
[5] Drury, History, p. 153.

The latter preached "to many people" at Martin Boehm's in 1783[1] and thereafter he records regular visits to these Germans, and sometimes describes their state of grace. "Martin Boehm is all on wings, and springs since the Lord hath blessed his grandchildren: his son Henry is greatly led out in public exercises."[2]

Boehm is but one of a group of independent preachers who propelled the revival among the Germans. The dean of the entire company is Christian Newcomer. Born January 21, 1749, of pious Mennonite parentage, he came in his youth to have a zealous aspiration for salvation. In his schooling behind the plow—the only kind he knew—he came to realize the disconsolateness of a divided spirit. In this uncomfortable state, while eating a peach he swallowed the stone, which threatened to choke him.

> O, the terror and anguish of soul that struck me: death and eternity staring me in the face, and my God not reconciled. . . . . It is utterly impossible to describe the anguish which seized me at this instant—suddenly to be removed into another existence to appear before the awful tribunal of the great Jehovah—and unprepared.[3]

In desperation he threw himself against a tree. The stone was dislodged but the experience prompted the resolution to work out his salvation immediately. Sometime thereafter an electrical storm brought him terror stricken again to the throne of grace.

> . . . . unable to utter a vowel, a vivid flash of lightning darted across my eyes: at the same time a clap of thunder. O, what a clap it was,—as it ceased the whole anguish of soul was removed.[4]

But that ineffable peace was gradually lost, though he followed the advice of a Mennonite elder, was baptized, joined the church, and took the sacrament. Misfortunes and responsibilities throttled

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[1]Asbury, Journal, Vol. II, June 18, 1776.
[2]Ibid., August 1, 1799.
[3]Newcomer, Journal, p. 3.
[4]Ibid., p. 4.

his infant faith.

Bedridden with measles, he again was confronted with the enormity of his sins, but despite his penitence which disturbed his family, the heavens were as brass. Following two days and three nights of agonizing before God, his eyes fell upon Revelations 12:10-12, and the inner voice whispered all was well.

> . . . . my joy, my ecstasy was so great that I was in some measure as one beside himself; not to disturb those who were in the house locked in sleep, I ran out into the yard to give utterance to my feelings; there I gave glory and Halleleujahs to my Redeemer with a loud voice.[1]

The passion to communicate the new satisfaction was irresistible. Choosing a Mennonite preacher friend, he related the experience in terms admittedly "perhaps rather fervent" only to be accused of hastiness, credulity, and error "in believing such a professed experience."[2] The awe of the ministerial office restrained him from preaching to his "good-meaning" Mennonite neighbors. Throttling his "call," and disconsolate, he removed to Maryland. Thereupon "I was forsaken by my God, because I had forsaken Him."[3]

Though the Revolutionary spirit might estrange him from God, a fever, believed to be mortal, again made him God-conscious. While bedridden, he promised God eternal allegiance and obedience if health were restored; forthwith, an unutterable peace filled his soul. Following convalescence, he fraternized with Otterbein and Geeting followers.[4] On a trip to Lancaster County friends, he found them in "the same ignorance and inexperience of religion" as when he had left, but when he timidly took the opportunity to

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[1] Newcomer, Journal, p. 6.
[2] Ibid., p. 7.
[3] Ibid., p. 20.
[4] Ibid., p. 13.

speak of his own recent experience, a tearful meeting ensued. After this visit, he left the Mennonites "on account of the want of life and power of religion among them," and joined the United Ministers because "these preached the same doctrine which I had experienced, and which . . . . so perfectly agreed with the doctrine of Jesus Christ."[1]

October 27, 1795, Christian Newcomer set out itinerating, unordained and without ecclesiastical commission, but overwhelmed with an irresistible sense of divine urgency he rode across hills and valleys to minister to the Germans who had settled in the Carolinas, Virginia, Delaware, Ohio, Indiana—but especially to the settlers in Pennsylvania. He made nineteen trips to the west, the last when he was eighty years old.

An enthusiastic exponent of revivalism in and about Antietam, Maryland, was George Adam Geeting.[2] German born, and of Reformed parentage, he was given exceptional educational advantages, and became an unusual linguist. When eighteen he came to America, and settled at Antietam where he became the village schoolmaster. Convicted of sin by the fervent message of Otterbein, Geeting professed a thorough salvation. The impoverished Germans asked him to conduct Sunday services for them; he complied to the extent of reading sermons. Following several years of training with Otterbein,[3] the latter with William Hendel, ordained Geeting in a distinctly irregular manner. That this rite Geeting did not consider valid is revealed by his personal application for examination and ordination to the Coetus in 1788.[4] The

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[1] Newcomer, Journal, p. 14.
[2] Harbaugh, Lives, II, 398. Spayeth, History, pp. 60, 130.
[3] Hincke, Minutes, p. 418.
[4] Ibid., p. 418.

application provoked a lengthy discussion, indicative of the suspicions already raised against him, but eventually he was received because he had already served several years as catechist under Otterbein, and furthermore, the congregations were too weak to pay a full salary. His name appears on the Coetus roster in 1791;[1] thereafter until his expulsion, he was consistently absent from Synod.

Endowed with less natural ability, less poised than Otterbein, Geeting was led by his impetuosity into more intensive evangelistic measures. Though nominally settled at Antietam by the Coetus, he itinerated with a revivalist's abandon. Occasionally he accompanied Newcomer on barn storming trips for the gospels' sake.[2] His nominal relation to the Reformed Church occasionally gave him access to Reformed congregations in Carlisle, Johnstown, and Lebanon.[3] His journeys took him into Virginia, but chiefly through Adams, Franklin, Cumberland, Lebanon, and Lancaster Counties, Pennsylvania.[4]

In preaching he was relentless in following the sinner's path, showing the severity of God's law in such a manner that stout hearts quailed, and came in penitential tears seeking salvation. October 23, 1803, following his sermon at a sacramental meeting there was a "truly melting time."

> Very little was spoken on account of the crying mourners, and the joy of believers. In a short time the whole assembly was in commotion, some shouting, others calling on God for mercy. We prayed with them for a considerable time.[5]

That Geeting was "an enthusiast of the most pronounced type whose

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[1] Hincke, Minutes, p. 419.
[2] Newcomer, Journal, pp. 39, 53, 63.
[3] Ibid., pp. 41, 63, 75.
[4] Ibid., pp. 53, 39, 40, 63, et al. Harbaugh, Lives, II.
[5] Newcomer, Journal, pp. 114, 243, etc.

preaching was attended by extraordinary excitement"[1] cannot be denied.

Rumors of this conduct spread among his brethren of the Synod, and during the session of 1804, Dr. C. L. Becker of Baltimore, the foe of Otterbein and a firm opponent of all new measures preferred charges against the absent Geeting. The specific accusation was disorderly conduct. Some suggested in view of the defendant's absence, he be warned and given a year to redeem himself by more seemly conduct. This was rejected, and by a vote of 20 to 17 Geeting was expelled from the Synod, with the promise of readmission upon evidence of true reformation.[2] There is no evidence to show Geeting took cognizance, much less offense, at his expulsion. The remaining eight years of his life were spent in a tireless ministry outside of the recognized ecclesiastical channels. He supported devotedly the rising United Brethren movement.

Two years after Newcomer began to itinerate, a German tilemaker-farmer undertook a traveling ministry. Jacob Albright was born in a German Lutheran home near Pottstown in 1759, but fell a prey to the religious indifference of the times. Although his name appears on the church records as late as 1781, religion had lost its significance for him. Marrying Katherine Cope in 1785 he removed to Lancaster County. Like Newcomer, he saw the hand of God in the misfortunes which fell upon him, a conviction which was intensified as Antony Hautz preached the funeral sermons for his children in 1790. Overpowering conviction, fear, and a crushing sense of his own unworthiness led him to disparage the

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[1] J. H. Dubbs, Historic Manual of the Reformed Church in the United States, p. 132x. Lancaster, 1885.

[2] Minutes, p. 433.

hope he might ever be saved.[1] Nevertheless he fasted and prayed. Nearby lived Adam Riegel who was an independent and a frequent host of Newcomer's[2] and possibly a later member of the United Brethren,[3] who took a fraternal interest in his disconsolate neighbor. July, 1791, in a home service, Albright found God.

> In the place of carnality came a holy love to God, His Word, and all His true children. Gradually every anguish of heart was removed, and comfort and the blessed peace of God pervaded my soul . . . . one joyful experience followed another, and such a sweet peace now filled my soul as no pen can describe or mortal tongue can express, in comparison with which the greatest earthly happiness I previously enjoyed was only wretchedness and deceit.[4]

Thereupon Albright joined a Methodist class under the supervision of Isaac Davis, because he was attracted by the disciplinary and doctrinal superiority of the Methodists.[5] His zeal won recognition, and Albright was appointed exhorter. This meager exercise of his gifts was the prelude to the call to preach. Like Newcomer he sensed his lack of preparation and inability for the task, and hesitated. Sickness fell upon him, and his distraction was intensified by the feeling that God had deserted him. When prostrate, he agreed to serve God in his ministry immediately, if he were restored to health.

October, 1797, Albright began an eleven year itinerancy without ordination or ecclesiastical sanction. Only an irrepressible desire to preach Christ commissioned him to preach in Virginia and Maryland, but especially to the Germans of Pennsylvania. Physical infirmity, aggravated by the hardships of an itinerant's life, brought him to a premature death in April, 1808.

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[1] Yeakle, Mitarbeiter, p. 26. Extract from Albright.
[2] Newcomer, Journal, pp. 67, 107, etc.
[3] Minutes. See years 1809, 1812.
[4] Yeakle, Mitarbeiter, p. 31. Extract from Day-book.
[5] Ibid., p. 35.

John G. Pfrimmer arrived in America during 1782. Save for his Reformed Church antecedents little is known of his early religious life until his appearance in 1792 as an independent and irregular Reformed preacher in the Dreisbach Church, Union County.[1] Four years later, Newcomer and Geeting visited the work, and a quarterly meeting was held.[2] In 1800 he with Newcomer conducted an unusually ardent sacramental meeting.[3] Thereupon there burst upon him the vision of the itinerancy, and the state became his parish;[4] in 1806 Weber of Pittsburgh complained of his proselyting.[5]

Jacob Gruber was of Reformed parentage, but in the early 90's two Methodist preachers appeared "without any special ecclesiastical authority, and without any regard whatever for the old established order of things," and he with his parents were converted and joined the Methodists,[6] vowing to pray "seven times daily." Appearing at conference in 1800 he was assigned to the Tioga circuit which for six months service paid him $5.67.[7] After numerous successful pastorates he was appointed to a presiding eldership in 1810 and continued in the superintendency until 1819.

George Müller followed his youthful inclinations, and wandered from the pious adminitions of his Lutheran mother until illness seized him, and he turned to the Bible. Catechetical instruction from the Lutheran pastor at Reading stilled his dis-

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[1] Harbaugh, Lives, III, 464.
[2] Newcomer, Journal, p. 22, etc.
[3] Ibid., p. 75, etc.
[4] Ibid., pp. 38, 33, 69, et al.
[5] Minutes, 1806.
[6] W. P. Strickland, Life of Jacob Gruber, p. 10. New York, 1860.
[7] Ibid., p. 18.

quietude and he dismissed the matter of religion from his mind, save on the several occasions when death appeared imminent. After an apprenticeship served with his brother which acquainted him with Brother Dunkle, "a righteous man," he bought a farm in Schuylkill County, intending to build a mill thereon. A relentless spiritual turbulence led him to promise God that upon the completion of the mill he would serve Him. Three years elapsed before he found a satisfying peace, through the ministry of Albright. After serving as a class leader, in 1805 he became an itinerant though "worldly matters" almost severed him from the larger ministry which he continued intermittently until his death, April, 1816. Of a simple heart, without formal training or ecclesiastical commission or ordination, he fervently preached Christ.[1]

This list of enthusiastic evangelists could be greatly protracted. Christian Smith, Christopher Grosh, the Hersheys, Felix Licht, John Neidig, John Walter, Abraham Zeller, Jacob Fry, the Leesers, the Betzs, John Dreisbach, Henry Kumler, John Fetterhoff, Joseph Hoffman, Christian Krum, David Snyder, the Thomases, Abraham Troxel, John Aurandt, George Benedum, Martin Kreider, Simon Herr, Jacob Bowlus, and Abraham Mayer were equally passionate, equally earnest, equally deserving of credit in their smaller spheres.[2]

It is patent that these men initially were self-made, independent preachers, unrecognized by any denomination. They were untutored and unordained—and spurned both learning and ecclesiastical commission in their impetuous passion to preach the Gospel.

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[1] Yeakle, Mitarbeiter, p. 173 f. Story of Müller.

[2] Texts referring to these and others: Yeakle, Arbeiter; Spayeth, History; Day books of Fetterhoff, Kumler, Newcomer, Dreisbach, etc.; Harbaugh, Lives, III, 180.

They recognized no authority other than the voice of God which spoke irresistibly to each. With but several exceptions, they were exclusively dependent upon their personal resources for their livelihood, for the revivalists' gospel was so free that the recompense accruing from the ministry was negligible. Nevertheless heroically, and without promise of support, they ignored any earlier church connections and with sectarian zeal attacked the formalism and irreligion entrenched in the established German churches. They would brook no compromise with the spirit of the day.

The technique employed by these men contributed largely to the promulgation of revivalism in the scattered German settlements. Notwithstanding the necessity of earning a livelihood which bound each of them to a farm unless the coöperative labors of wife and children released him, the more aggressive of these men were traveling preachers, alert to the slightest opportunity and not hesitant to make an opportunity where none appeared.

Where churches or homes were closed to the itinerant he readily met the situation by preaching in the adjacent church yard, the school house, the court house lot, an empty lot, or if driven to extremity he did not hesitate to use the street.[1] When weather permitted, and the attendance at private meetings swelled beyond the capacity of the cabin, he took his congregation into the field or grove.[2] The passion for souls quickly smothered any sense of impropriety which this irregular mode of preaching might have induced. The revivalist's estrangement from his church naturally conspired to make the frontier cabin the primary factor

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[1] Newcomer, Journal, pp. 21, 47, 177, passim.
[2] Ibid., pp. 93, 108, 131, 178, 191.

in the propagation of his passionate gospel. The hospitality of the German farmer-frontiersman rarely denied him lodging, regardless of the faith of the landlord;[1] not infrequently, after an introductory visit, this isolated man was happy to arrange meetings, for it satisfied his yearning for company.[2]

The oldest devices for the general propagation of the gospel were the Grosse Versammlungen—Big Meetings, which won the unstinted support of every revivalist. These were occasionally held in groves, and to that extent may be the antecedents of the campmeeting; sometimes in barns; sometimes in homes. For two days the curious and the convinced mingled fraternally, though the unsaved were less numerous and less boisterous than at campmeetings. The expense of the meeting was borne by a generous Christian. Preachers from several communities came and exhorted, and the success of the meeting was interpreted in terms of weeping and jubilation. A participant describes one such meeting thus:

> It was not considered a strange thing . . . . for the brother at whose house the meeting was to be held to slaughter a few hogs, sheep or calves, and on extra occasions, a beef, and to have a quantity of bread, cakes, and pies baked, with bushels of potatoes and other vegetables ready for use. Indispensable . . . . was a large table, from ten to twenty feet in length, and from four to five feet in breadth. The top of it was made of good tough oak or pine boards from one to two inches in thickness. These were placed upon a frame supported by feet made of oak or pine scantling. The table was then decorated with large pewter and earthen dishes and bowls which were placed in the center as receptacles . . . . out of which the consumers were supplied. These Big Meetings were attended by crowds of people. Some came from great distances. The hosts at whose houses the meetings were held were not scared when they saw carriages, wagons, and vehicles of all sizes then in use, drawn by four legged animals and loaded with saints and sinners coming to the meeting. Some came to see and to be seen: others to hear preaching. In many instances, from one to two hundred persons were entertained and fed during the meeting, together with their horses. At the meeting at Dan Whistler's . . . . upwards of four hundred persons

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[1] MSS. Dreisbach day book, p. 27.

[2] Newcomer, Journal, passim.

took dinner at his house on the Sabbath.[1]

This two day meeting which was made possible by the generosity of an able farmer was the scene of the conviction of many a sinner, and the source of instauration and jubilation for many a saint.

When the celebration of the Lord's Supper was a feature of the program, the meetings were termed Sacramental Meetings. With the conversion of many people there was the desire for the sacraments. The established churches carefully guarded them by allowing only the ordained to administer them; the established sects assiduously debarred non-members from the Table. The independent evangelists opened the Holy Meal to all the saved. The hesitancy of the revivalists of Lutheran and Reformed origin to dispense the sacraments stands in marked contrast to the position of those from other antecedents. While Albright never took the responsibility for serving the sacraments, Christian Newcomer, before his first year of ministry was concluded, celebrated the Supper with a two day meeting at Paradise.[2] Not infrequently the Lord's Supper was preceded with a Love Feast and the ceremonial feetwashing.[3] However, on every occasion the Sacramental Meeting was one of unusual religious intensity where one might hear simultaneously the jubilations of the saved and the penitential wails of the sinners under conviction.[4] The free participation revealed in the Big Meetings, was equally apparent in the sacramental services where men of diverse or no church affiliations coöperated without discrimination.[5]

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[1] S. Huber, Autobiography, p. 74. Chambersburg, 1858.
[2] Newcomer, Journal, p. 21.
[3] Ibid., pp. 93, 133, 165, et al.
[4] Ibid., pp. 98, 108, 121.
[5] Dreisbach MSS, p. 21.

Though the Germans had remained overnight as the guests of an able host in the Big Meeting, the campmeeting with its protracted services did not find a place among the Germans until English revivalists had used it for a decade. There is no certain origin for the campmeeting in America;[1] certainly they were unknown in Kentucky and Tennessee before 1800.[2] The first revivalist to note a campmeeting is Christian Newcomer, who on August 10, 1804, in Berkley County, Virginia, beheld a sight "the like of which I have never seen before." The circle of neat white tents; the throng of men, women, and children (4,000); the regular sermons at ten, three, and candlelight; the distress of the sinner; the resounding shouts of assurance; the fraternity of Christian brethren—all these were impressive to the German itinerant.[3] The next summer the Methodists sponsored such a meeting in Delaware, where Newcomer found twenty-seven preachers.[4]

The first campmeeting in Pennsylvania was held October 4, 1805, in York County, and reveals the activity of the Germans. "A great multitude of people . . . . assembled. I preached. . . . Brother Steel followed me, but he had presently to cease speaking on account of the lamentations and crying."[5] The following Sunday the throng swelled to 4,000.

> The power of God was present in a most remarkable manner: during the whole night the exercises were continued with the mourners, many found peace with God, and were enabled to sing and shout praises to the Lamb for his mercy. [Monday] was a real day of Pentecost: bless the Lord, convicting and converting grace came down with such plentiful showers . . . .

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[1]For suggestions see: R. Semple, History of Baptists in Virginia, p. 23; Atkinson, Centennial History of American Methodism, p. 489.

[2]Cleveland, Great Western Revival, p. 53.

[3]Newcomer, Journal, p. 125.

[4]Ibid., p. 130.

[5]Ibid., p. 139.

> that the most obdurate were not able to hold out any longer. This day I was not able to speak above my breath, but my heart is rejoicing. Who would not cheerfully sacrifice bodily health, and even life itself for the salvation of immortal souls? The preachers present were Ower, Cassel, Gruber, Birch, Emmet, Steel, Wells, Neidig, Sneider, Fordenbaugh, Benedum, and poor unworthy me.[1]

Of the twelve, seven were Methodists; the remainder were independent German preachers.

The first exclusively German campmeeting was held May 10, 1810, on the farm of Michael Maize, Union County.

> The members had come from all directions: some from a distance of eighty miles with their wagons, tents; provision, etc. The preaching of the Word made deep impressions upon many . . . . others were wounded by the Spirit so that they had no more rest until they gave themselves up to the Lord.[2]

Thereafter German campmeetings were annually sponsored by enthusiastic preachers for the promulgation of the Gospel.

These itinerants were shrewd enough to realize that the enthusiasm engendered in a private meeting, Big Meeting, Sacramental Meeting, or Campmeeting would evaporate unless guided, and therefore they wisely counseled the class meeting. Following an enthusiastic meeting in Cumberland County, more than forty were converted:

> . . . . many of whom united together in church fellowship as an order of their own, separate from other churches. And as they had no regular preacher to serve them, they selected Brother Whistler as their pastor. . . . . All this was begun and carried forward through the local ministry.[3]

Usually the work proceeded more slowly than this, and not without practical reason the itinerant adopted the Methodist class system to sustain the work in his absence. Asbury had conferred with Otterbein on the nature of a proposed church among the Germans; Geeting's expulsion was in part due to his acceptance and propaga-

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[1]Newcomer, Journal, p. 139.
[2]Orwig, Geschichte, p. 52. Evangelical Messenger, 1846 ff.
[3]Huber, Autobiography, p. 177.

tion of the class system.[1] Newcomer was holding class meetings before 1807, and despite opposition urged their general acceptance.[2] Jacob Albright's early affiliation with the Methodists accounts for his use of the class meeting. However, the purpose of the German class appears to have had less of the disciplinary element, and more of the didactic, with its desire to edify "in the bonds of Christian fellowship, and in the unity of faith, in accordance with the teaching of Christ and His Apostles."[3] In the class system the revivalists conserved and guided the great enthusiasm.

In the revival which emerged about 1795 and spread throughout the rural German settlements during the next twenty years, the central figure was the preacher. The effectual power of any technique used, ultimately was dependent upon "God's prophet." Creed played an insignificant role; while that adopted by the United Ministers at Peter Kemp's,[4] plainly reveals the erudition of William Otterbein, elsewhere there was a stolid indifference to creed. The Bible was an ample statement of the articles of religion.[5]

The gospel preached by the revivalists was distinctly Biblical, and seemed to cluster about several well defined poles. The premise upon which every exhortation was constructed was the absolute necessity for a spiritual rebirth of which one could speak with assurance, and which terminated in holy living. Beside this, church membership and confirmation paled into nothingness.

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[1] J. Dubbs, The Reformed Church in Pennsylvania, p. 243. Lancaster, 1902.

[2] Newcomer, Journal, p. 135.

[3] Yeakle, Geschichte, I, 67.

[4] See chap. ix (of the complete dissertation).

[5] Yeakle, Geschichte, I, 56.

The Lutherans were bluntly told they had Luther and the catechism

> . . . . but your sinful lives prove you are not Lutherans, for you live contrary to God's Word and Luther's teaching. And you German Reformed—what does it mean to be reformed? It means to be restored, to be converted from sin, and the world to God: but your lives prove that you have turned from God toward the world.[1]

The Dunkers were told that "baptism alone would not save their souls, but they must seek for the spiritual baptism."[2] Whether implied or articulated, the necessity of salvation was the premise of every revivalist.

Central in the sermonology was Jesus, especially the blood of Jesus with its divine power to purge from sin.

> The blood of Jesus is sufficient for the vilest of the vile. All that God requires of you is that you should humble yourself at the footstool of mercy; come to the bleeding lamb of God, to the Lord Jesus Christ with all your sins: he is ready, He is willing and able to save those which are lost. His blood can make the foulest clean.[3]

No sermon was a sermon without the presentation of Jesus as the Savior of the world.

To facilitate the acceptance of eternal salvation, these preachers dwelt rapturously on the glories of heaven and the agonies of hell. The great Day of Judgment, and the occasion of the opening of the Lamb's Book were incidents of especial homiletic value. So vividly did one preacher picture Judgment Day that a young man "thought he saw the Judge coming in the clouds of heaven and soon it happened to him as it did to Saul—he became blind for a short time."[4] So blissfully was heaven described that a lady in feeble health prayed to go to heaven from the spot. She departed "in transports of joy and she went to join the song of

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[1]Yeakle, Mitarbeiter, p. 71. Albright's day book.
[2]Huber, Autobiography, p. 50.
[3]Newcomer, Journal, p. 47.
[4]Yeakle, Mitarbeiter, p. 72.

the redeemed."[1] The devil mustered great attention, as every impediment to revivalistic work was attributed to his nefarious activity.[2] Hell was colorfully described. One preacher so frequently spoke about the nether regions that he was denounced for "preaching people to hell."[3] The contrast between the two eternal homes was distinctly, luridly, and repeatedly presented. One revivalist naïvely confessed:

> I told them they must receive Christianity, or hell would reap them. I made hell as hot, and awful as I could; and heaven as sweet as I could speak of it, and the Christian life pleasant.[4]

To augment the argument that the sinner should make peace with his God the element of immediacy was introduced; the reconciliation ought to be <u>now</u>. This sense of immediacy was supported by two further arguments. Chiliasm did not especially bother the frontier preacher; it was a feature of Otterbein's ministry, expressed dispassionately and cautiously:

> It is certain that these prophecies [Revelations] will be fulfilled, and they are fulfilling from day to day, and you may live to see great things. But what to do Now? Hear what Christ says 'Therefore be ye ready, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh.' And that is the best thing we can do—make our calling sure.[5]

For the general German revivalist the immediacy was less attributable to the possible advent of Jesus, than to the uncertainty of life. Amidst elemental and natural dangers, the sinner lived in the midst of death; to procrastinate was perilous.

Sanctification was a doctrine stressed with varying degrees of intensity, dependent largely upon the religious anteced-

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[1]Strickland, <u>Gruber</u>, p. 43.

[2]Yeakle, <u>Mitarbeiter</u>, pp. 224, 231, 236. Harbaugh, <u>Lives</u>, II, 398.

[3]Newcomer, <u>Journal</u>, p. 83.

[4]Dreisbach MSS, p. 9.

[5]Drury, <u>Otterbein</u>, p. 341 f. Quoted.

ents of the preacher. All of them believed in its reality. Otterbein when questioned relative to it replied we ought both

> . . . . pray for the spirit of sanctification, since before we do this, we cannot by any means comprehend it. . . . . The word of God speaks plainly enough making a difference between justification and sanctification. . . . . Is it not one thing when Pharoah takes Joseph from prison, and another when he enrobes him in kingly apparel, and sets him a prince over the whole land of Egypt? . . . . He that denies the possibility of living without sin, denies God. . . . .[1]

The evangelists of Mennonite extraction took less to the preaching of Christian perfection. Newcomer occasionally expresses his aspiration for "sanctifying grace," and that state in which he should be swallowed up in God's redeeming love.[2] That he came to know such an experience is a legitimate inference from the concluding statement of an argument with Mr. Edinger who held "no person could be made free from sin until death; that sin and grace were necessary to preserve believers in humility. This I could not admit."[3] To the revivalists of Methodist affinity, this teaching had basic import. Albright had affiliated with the Davis Methodist Class, and there learned of Wesleyan perfectionism. Furthermore he confesses

> I attained to a state in which my heart was almost continually lifted up to God and realized the ability to be temperate in all things, to love God supremely, and my neighbor as myself; for God, and Christ through His Spirit quickened my soul, so that I did not live unto myself, but to the glory of God, and the welfare of humanity.[4]

When Albright discovered one of his aids was unable to affirm a certain sanctifying experience, he admonished him to

> . . . . seek this grace without delay, else I could not stand in great trials; for the devil would not cease his attacks, and therefore I should need this grace in order to overcome,

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[1]Drury, Otterbein, quoted, pp. 227, 340.
[2]Newcomer, Journal, p. 92.
[3]Ibid., p. 160.
[4]Yeakle, Mitarbeiter, p. 43, quoted.

> and willingly and with thankfulness accept all hardships and crosses as coming from the hand of the Lord.[1]

How Miller followed his advice, and promulgated this teaching is a matter of record.[2]

This Christian message centering about the necessity of rebirth, the saving blood of Jesus, the urgency of salvation, and sanctification was undergirded by the preacher's feeling that he was acting under divine compulsion, and could do not otherwise. That sense of divine urgency equipped them to ignore their excommunication from their parent churches. That spirit would countenance no tampering:

> My uncle thought I should not speak quite so rough. I said, 'Did I speak the truth?' He said I did. 'I shall keep to that as long as I live, not caring who are pleased, or displeased.[3]

It made them ambitious and indefatigable: "Brother Neidig, will you allow yourself no rest?" "I do not wish to be found idle if the Lord should come."[4] It made them bold: The feeling is epitomized in the confession of one of them, "I felt that I must go, or be damned."[5]

The emotionalism which accompanied the revival is attributable to the impetuosity and individualism of the day, and to the revivalists' conviction that "a faith whose habitation is only in the head, and not in the heart, is insufficient for salvation."[6] In the wake of lurid descriptions of the awfulness of hell, the woeful fate of the soul uncovered by the Blood of the Lamb, men, women, and children succumbed to the intense waves of

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[1]Yeakle, Mitarbeiter, p. 219, quoted.
[2]Ibid., pp. 248, 254; also Glaubenslehre, 1809.
[3]Fetterhoff, Autobiography, p. 35.
[4]Spayeth, History, quoted, pp. 73, 75.
[5]Fetterhoff, Auto., p. 26.
[6]Newcomer, Journal, p. 13.

religious excitement. The singular types of behavior connected with the German revival are not as numerous as those recorded by Miss Cleveland among the enthusiasts of eastern Kentucky and Tennessee.[1] Nevertheless, the peculiarities that did attend German revivalism were sufficiently reprehensible to cause opponents to call revivalists "bewitchers," and insist that they be shunned.[2]

There are obvious reasons for the rise of these phenomena about 1800, quite apart from the influence of the Kentucky revival. First, for thirty years the states had passed through a succession of crises which had taxed popular nerve. The X. Y. Z. papers, and the ensuing popular outburst, the Fries uprising, the threats against President Adams, were secular expressions of a people whose nerves were frayed and jumpy. Second, the crop of independent preachers was first well under way at the turn of the century; experimentation was past for them.

The jerks, so common in the West,[3] played a minor role among the German evangelistic phenomena. Their appearance was late. In the autumn of 1803, Newcomer on his itinerary through western Pennsylvania saw one who shook so violently "that two or three men could scarcely hold him."[4] The only case on record east of the Susquehanna occurred in 1809. When in company with Geeting, after a "soul reviving time," he saw a woman "who shook in every limb in a very remarkable manner. When the person recovered, she praised God."[5] However, the jerks are a rare phenomenon of the enthusiasm of the Germans.

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[1] C. Cleveland, Great Revival, p. 138 f.
[2] Seybert MSS, Day book, p. 38.
[3] Cleveland, op. cit., p. 143.
[4] Newcomer, Journal, p. 115.
[5] Ibid., p. 212.

Jumping was less tardy in its appearance. George Müller, later himself an enthusiast, accounts it as one of the deterrents to his own conversion in 1802. Of all the antics

> . . . . the most repulsive to me was that some sprang upon their feet, and shouted and praised God so loud that it made my ears tingle. After observing this agitation, I was inclined to think that such confusion could not be the work of the Holy Ghost.[1]

May 31, 1801, Newcomer superintended a meeting at Christian Herr's where people jumped up and down, "praising God as was never witnessed before."[2] At a Sacramental service at Christian Hershey's, October 17, 1801, he beheld a happy congregation: "Old and young were like persons intoxicated, shouting and jumping in ecstasy of joy."[3]

Falling was the earliest and the most popular of the phenomena. In the autumn of 1799 George Miller heard Albright preach and in the course of the service discovered "I was touched in such a manner through his powerful sermon that if I had not taken hold of a table, I should have sunk to the floor."[4] The temptation which Miller experienced others succumbed to. From this time falling became a common phenomenon of revivalism on both slopes of the Alleghanies. The contagiousness of the phenomenon is eloquently illustrated in Newcomer's entries during November, 1801, when enthusiasm was unrestrained.

On the evening of November 10, Newcomer stopped at Mr. Bonnet's ("an intelligent German"), and that night some fell to the floor before he had spoken long, while others cried so loudly,

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[1]Yeakle, Mitarbeiter, p. 190, quoted from Miller's day book.

[2]Newcomer, Journal, p. 82.

[3]Ibid., p. 87.

[4]Yeakle, Mitarbeiter, p. 195, quoted from Miller's day book.

the preacher's voice was inaudible. The next day, Newcomer preached at Mr. Schwab's, and again people fell lifelessly to the floor. On the evening of the same day at Christian Manensmidt's "people fell down and laid as if in a swoon or fainting fit." On the 12th, for the third consecutive day, many were "slain of the Lord." The next day was Sunday, and memorable for its Pentecost:

> Today we had indeed a little Pentecost, from 300 to 400 persons had collected more than the barn in which we had assembled for worship could contain. I preached to them from Titus 3: with great liberty and effect for the salvation of souls. The congregation was remarkably attentive to the Word, though it rained, those that had no shelter in the barn, kept their stand in the rain without the least disturbance. It is indeed surprising and at least to me somewhat mysterious, to behold the manner in which the power of God works here among the people. During the time of preaching, several persons fell to the floor, some laid as if they were dead; sometimes the excitement would be so great that I had to stop speaking for several minutes until the noise abated; some few were praising God and shouting for joy. . . . . When I concluded my discourse in the German, I then preached in the English language, and the effect was again the same. At night I preached at Mr. Swart's; here also several persons of both sexes fell to the floor; so it lasted till after midnight.[1]

On the 14th, 15th, and 16th the fallings continued. Following a two day interval, on the 19th the unusual behavior was again apparent. On Sunday, the 20th,

> We dismissed the meeting but the people had no desire to depart: I spoke to them again until almost exhausted, still they continued to stay. At night we had an appointment at a distance of a mile and a half: here again the Lord was present, sinners on every side fell to the floor as if they were shot. Among others was a youth of about thirteen years of age. Some were struck with awe, others flew into a passion, gathered their friends and relatives up and carried them out of the house, saying this was the work of the devil. I endeavored to persuade them with meekness to let the poor souls alone, desiring them to have patience only until their friends should be restored and revive their consciousness; adding, that if it is the work of the devil or the power of darkness, your friends will curse when they revive; and if it is the work of God, they will pray and praise the Lord. They carried the youth upstairs, and there laid him on a bed watching him with great anxiety. When he recovered from his swoon, he immediately began to praise God, and exhorting all around in so

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[1]Newcomer, Journal, p. 195.

> wonderful a manner that about a dozen of them came in distress, confessing with tears that they had sinned against God, and crying 'What shall we do to be saved?' They sent for me to come and pray for them for God's sake; for they said 'We are lost and undone forever.' Some of them experienced mercy and pardon. . . . . So it continued until after midnight, when I was so much exhausted that I had to leave them.[1]

After another day he crossed the Alleghanies, and while the meetings thereafter were resonant with the shouts of the blessed, fallings were more infrequent.

However, before this particular phenomenon appeared, and even after it departed, the unmistakable sign of the Spirit's presence was the emotional response to the message. Tears and lamentation were expected from the sinner; ejaculations and shouts of jubilee and glory from the saints, and unless these were forthcoming the meeting was considered a failure; when a meeting was punctuated with groans, loud praying, or shouting, and vehement hand clapping, it was a success, ipso facto.[2] Frankly, the revivalists had no time for "still born children." As one of them said:

> The mingling of sounds, such as singing, praying, exhorting, mourning, shouting together with the sight of sinner prostrated, mourners converted, new converts jumping for joy, saints rejoicing, preachers giving glory to God; afforded a pleasing sight and sensation to all who went in for propagating the cause of God, and destroying the works of the devil.[3]

The "durchbruch" came after a period of keen distress, lasting a few days or weeks during which the sinner sensed his own precarious position at the mouth of a consuming hell, and also his own inability to rescue himself. Hell was horribly vivid, but the saints were persistent in their attempt to save a soul.

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[1] Newcomer, Journal, p. 106.

[2] Ibid., pp. 101, 115, 117, 137, 142, 171, passim. Also: Dreisbach MSS, p. 13; Strickland, op. cit., p. 125; Yeakle, Mitarbeiter, p. 141.

[3] Huber, Autobiography, p. 122.

With thee all night we mean to stay
And wrestle till the break of day.[1]

The preacher's message with its crude, lurid imagery was directed to a crude calloused people, and the sinner was disconcerted. One confessed, "I felt as if something was crawling up my body, so that I could scarcely stand up."[2] In the wake of this period of distress, there followed an emotional saturnalia wherein the "redeemed of the Lord said so," and said it boisterously.

In the salvation of isolated individuals, and in the development of the subsequent religious life of the saved, dreams played an unusually large part. The German farmers were a simple, credulous people. For whooping cough they took the hair of one who never saw his father, and placed it about the neck of the patient; for epilepsy, take a skein of unwashed yarn, spun by a seven year old, burn the yarn, and add the ashes to the patient's food.[3] The belief in the meaning of dreams was but a segment of their general credulity. A dream not infrequently preceded the "durchbruch." Huber, returning from the evening service "dreamed the day of Judgment had come; that the whole world was on fire, the earth quaking, and his house sinking down." Hounded by the saved during the day, and haunted by disturbing dreams at night, the sinner found refuge in a glorious religious experience.

The journals of the itinerants reveal a faithful narrative of dreams through which God gave directions to His servants, or in apocalyptic imagery disclosed the future. Kumler dreamed himself ill for two years with consumption, during which he grew gradually weaker until he died. Later reflecting on the dream,

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[1]Revival hymn quoted by Strickland, op. cit., p. 64.
[2]Kumler, Autobiography, p. 73.
[3]Folk lore of the Pennsylvania Germans.

he was convinced it was God's manner of revealing that within two years he would die to the German Reformed Church, for his revivalism caused his expulsion from that communion within two years from the time of the dream.[1] Home and loved ones, and Indians played a large role in recorded dreams.[2]

Nor are exaggerations wanting. Fetterhoff found himself chased by mad dogs and mad Irishmen, both symbolic of the Evil One, but was happily rescued in each case by a "white man," Christ. This later was interpreted by the recipient as a divine call to the ministry. Another beheld himself as a uniformed soldier, armed with a sword with which he unmercifully attacked the enemy, some of whom he beheaded, and the remainder he routed. After the battle he returned to the decapitated, replaced their heads, prayed for them, and they became his allies in fighting the enemy.[3]

How soberly the dream was considered is illustrated by its influence in the compilation of a discipline for one of the new churches. Christmas eve, 1808, George Miller was the guest of a hospitable Methodist host. Upon retiring, he dreamed: He walked on a snowy road which went the way to heaven. Fatigue seemed to overpower him, but to sleep was fatal for the wild beasts and the cold made an awakening impossible. Suddenly the New Jerusalem broke upon his vision, and he rejoiced until he saw an unbridged stream separating himself from the Holy City. In his perplexity an angel appeared, and conveyed him to the resplendent dwellings, and pointed out his future mansion. Miller asked to see the Lord, but was told

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[1]Kumler, Autobiography, p. 198.

[2]Dreisbach MSS, pp. 6, 9, 5, 21, 31; Fetterhoff, Autobiography, p. 22.

[3]Fetterhoff, op. cit., p. 20 f.

> 'As soon as you will have perfectly obeyed the Holy Scriptures and the Discipline which you will compile from the same,' but now you must first go back to the earth and complete this important work. I gave him as an answer, 'If God would write upon my heart his word, and that which I was to compile out of it, I would be ready to go back again, but if not, then I would refuse to do it, for unless God would write upon my heart, I could not complete it. Now the angel took the stone that was found in my clock, and with great power stamped it upon my breast, and I felt as though an arrow had pierced me through and I had become mortally wounded. . . . .[1]

The next morning, still feeling the pain in his breast, Miller related to a fellow itinerant the Lord's disclosure of his early death and the work he must undertake. From the incentive furnished by this vision, Miller undertook and completed the compilation of a discipline for the Albright brethren.

That these phenomena of revival enthusiasm should receive opposition was to be expected. The itinerants were looked upon as false prophets, deceivers, and bewitchers of the people.[2] Their long hair and long fingers were irrefutable marks of their impish origin,[3] and the wise man, by fair means or foul, endeavored to evade them. The independence of these itinerants from any of the recognized churches made churchmen the more suspicious of revivalism.[4] Consequently they were frequently assailed in devious ways calculated to irritate them. This they accepted as from the Lord. Gruber was arrested upon a warrant sworn out by the president of a French Infidel Club.[5] On one occasion the preacher went to law. A meeting in Jonestown, August 1808, led by John Dreisbach, was rudely interrupted by rowdies who aimed to "get the preacher." The next day seven of the attackers were indicted;

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[1]Yeakle, Mitarbeiter, p. 242, quoted from Miller.
[2]Huber, op. cit., p. 54.
[3]Seybert MSS, day book.
[4]Huber, op. cit., p. 83.
[5]Strickland, Gruber, p. 66.

they made counter charges against the revivalists. At the trial in Harrisburg the worshipers were acquitted, and their opponents declared guilty. However,

> . . . . after the suit, the brethren remitted to their persecutors all their costs, thus showing them that they had not brought the suit against them from malice or revenge, but merely to teach them.[1]

Though sensitive to opposition,[2] the evangelists were so imbued with a passion to save souls that they could not be deterred.

Viewing in retrospect this revival movement, there are five general observations to be made. First, this evangelistic movement among the Pennsylvania Germans was fundamentally a laymen's revival, sponsored and effected by men without a recognized ordination, if any at all. Except for William Otterbein, who is rather the patron saint than the propagator of the revival, the ordination of all the evangelists may be successfully challenged. In the by and large they were farmers, who having been powerfully saved, were possessed by the passion to share their joys, and thereupon began to preach in the warm afterglow of their own experience with no other sanction than that of their own conscience. At best only partially supported by their ministry, they were dependent in part or altogether upon manual labor for their sustenance. Necessarily the services of these men were irregular. As late as 1813 Joseph Hoffman could win no major support to his proposition that "a man called of God to his sacred work should give his time and his all to the preaching of the Gospel and the performance of pastoral work."[3] That the professional preacher found so little a part in the revival is in part attributable to

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[1]Dreisbach, op. cit., p. 293.
[2]Ibid., p. 303.
[3]Thompson, Our Bishops, quoted, p. 175.

the unfavorable circumstance of the frontier which delayed the establishment of the church and a settled pastor; partly due the aversion of the recognized pastors of the Churches to revivalism; and in part due the Mennonite origin of a large number of the revivalists, among whom the farmer-preacher was the customary ecclesiastical pattern.

Second, a comprehensive retrospect reveals the primarily rural character of this movement. Of all the major revivalists, Otterbein in the Evangelical Reformed Church of Baltimore alone preached to an urban people, and there without numerical success. In 1791 after a ministry of twenty years there were but sixty members in the church; the increase thereafter was very modest.[1] In Pennsylvania the itinerants conspicuously avoided Philadelphia, Germantown, and Lancaster, preferring to concentrate their efforts upon the thrifty villages, the numerous hamlets, and the myriad of log cabins where Germans were to be found. The new churches that rose were distinctly rural denominations. The revival itself which bore them was primarily rural, and produced its fruits in the small villages and isolated homesteads of Pennsylvania.

Third, the revivalists possessed, though it is frequently ignored, an effective moral message for a secularized, mercenary, freedom loving age. "The moral ground here has to be first grubbed up and broken up before the seed of the Word can do well" was the observation of one upon his first visit to a community.[2]

The common vice of the German was drunkenness, which the revivalists flayed unmercifully. Otterbein took a decided stand against intemperance: "If a drunkard should meet a dog, he ought

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[1]Drury, Otterbein, p. 165.
[2]Fetterhoff, Autobiography, p. 37.

to lift his hat and say, 'Thou hast more sense than I.'"[1] From ministers he expected and demanded abstinence. To one tippling preacher he wrote: "You must either decide to go to hell, or give up drinking. There is no other way. . . . . Give up drinking or otherwise, God will give you up, and then, oh Woe!"[2] Although the evangelists rarely demanded abstinence from the people, the fact that they were "tetotallers" made favorable impressions even upon the blasé generation. When one calmly and inoffensively refused a drink a child in the home remarked:

> There is a difference between father's pastor and mother's. Father's pastor sings and prays, and talks about religion, and drinks no liquor when he visits us, but mother's does not pray but curses and gets drunk.[3]

The revivalists generally used tobacco without a qualm of conscience. Gruber alone of them all attacked the habit. Poetry and prose became the channels for his attack.

> Tobacco is an evil weed, and from the devil did proceed;
> It spoils your breath and burns your clothes,
> and makes a chimney of your nose.[4]

The same agile mind argued:

> I read in the Scriptures that the mustard seed is the smallest seed, that is, the smallest of all the seeds that the Lord has made, and everyone knows that the tobacco seed is smaller than the mustard seed, and therefore the devil must have made it.[5]

However, Gruber found little support for his anti-tobacco campaign.

Revivalists did decry the mercenary spirit. Finery and luxury were denounced in unmistakable terms;[6] any lady "embellished in the full regalia for worldly fashion" was an easy target for

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[1]Drury, Otterbein, p. 178.
[2]Ibid., p. 179.
[3]Yeakle, Geschichte, p. 84.
[4]Strickland, Gruber, p. 90.
[5]Ibid., p. 92, quoted.
[6]Huber, Autobiography, p. 55.

the verbose preacher. It was heartily wished that actors might "be banished from every town and city in America."[1] Where the revivalist, whose sole ambition was, as one put it, "to do the devil all the harm I could,"[2] met these sins, he scored them. Card-playing, dancing, theater going, frolicking, apple pealings, and cornhuskings were outside the pale of Christian conduct.[3] Luxuries and the theater were scarcely temptations for the poverty-stricken, frugal German farmer or artisan. The revivalists preached the gospel of hard work to a generation which had hard work to do. Luxury and finery meant dissipation in the secular and spiritual economies.

The revivalists had the opportunity to preach brotherliness as Negroes and Whites were brought together in a common service. Since souls were primary, the color of the skin was inconsequential. In one campmeeting a negro coachman

> . . . . held forth in such strains of power and eloquence that he astonished the natives. The whole camp felt the force of this eloquence. It fell upon the audience like rays of a hot sun upon ice bergs, melting down hearts, and causing tears to flow in all directions. It was conceded by all parties that he beat the field—and so we said Amen![4]

In August, 1818, Gruber, preaching at a campmeeting, scored drunkenness and slavery as the great national sins.

> Is it not a reproach to a man to hold articles of liberty and independence in one hand and a bloody whip in the other, while a negro stands and trembles before him with his back cut and bleeding? There is a laudable zeal manifest in our country to form Bible and Missionary societies to send the Scriptures and the Gospel to heathen nations. Would it not be well for some to be consistent, and instruct the heathen at home in their kitchens, and let them hear the Gospel?[5]

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[1] Drury, Otterbein, p. 69, quoted.
[2] Huber, Autobiography, p. 24.
[3] Fetterhoff, Autobiography, p. 13.
[4] Huber, Autobiography, p. 72.
[5] Strickland, Gruber, p. 130, quoted.

The sermon, despite its exhortation to the negroes to be pious, incurred the wrath of slaveholders, and a warrant for Gruber's arrest was issued. Gruber was charged with sedition and intent to disturb the peace. His lawyer, later Chief Justice, Roger B. Taney, masterfully declared the sermon above criticism unless it were immoral or dangerous, and furthermore asserted the inability of the prosecution to show the preacher's intent was malicious. Gruber was acquitted.[1]

Brotherliness was defined in its community as well as its interracial aspects. Reconciliations between fathers and sons, between families, and between other hostile parties are a cheering part of this study.[2]

The day books of these preachers would scarcely reveal the occurrence of the War of 1812. Their removal from the sea board, and their intense passion to "seek the lost" rendered them oblivious of the war with England. Those of Mennonite antecedents occasionally utter an aspiration for universal brotherhood, while others are completely silent on the whole matter.[3]

Third, this revivalism brought with it a democracy in religion that was startling to the Germans. It manifested itself in the spontaneous ministry which carried the fervent gospel to the most remote German settlements in Pennsylvania. These men, sometimes readily, sometimes after a period of professed aversion to the work, without the ordination or recognition of the established churches, or even the recognition of a local congregation, became self-appointed preachers. Their practical minds, and their

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[1]Strickland, Gruber, p. 47; Seybert MSS, p. 67; Yeakle, Geschichte, I, 111.

[2]Newcomer, Journal, passim.

[3]Dreisbach MSS, Diary, 1813.

nonchalant naïveté led them to seek ordination for themselves, and they ordained others.[1] This divergence from regular church government and order was parallel with the triumph of Jeffersonian republicanism with its hostility to traditionalism and centralization.

In the enthusiasm of the revival the opinion that "women should keep silent in the church" lost its significance. Women and children when intoxicated with the Spirit broke out in a song as jubilant and sonorous as that of the men; their testimony of the new work of grace in their hearts was equally affective.[2] The opponents of revivalism viewed this equality of the sexes with consternation and disgust.

Fourth, with revivalism came a firm fibered fraternity which was not so much syncretistic as eclectic, including not all but some. This fellow feeling was due partly to the varied denominational antecedents of the revivalists: Heistand and Grosh were from Moravian ancestry. Schaefer, Pfrimmer, Geeting, Otterbein, Niebel were of Reformed stock. Walter, Miller, Albright came from Lutheran homes. Erb, Herr, the Hersheys, Kreider, Neidig, Newcomer, Benedum, Bowlus, Mayer were converted Mennonites, while Troxel hailed from an Amish family. The revivalists were a cosmopolitan lot who had, despite their "rugged individualism," a common type of gospel which tended to draw them together. Camp-meetings, Big Meetings, and class meetings found them together with scarcely a perceptible distinction.[3]

With equal facility and grace they joined hands with

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[1] Yeakle, Geschichte, I, 103, 119; Newcomer, Journal, p. 181.

[2] See Widow Snyder; Dreisbach, Newcomer, et al.

[3] Cf. Newcomer, Miller, Dreisbach, passim.

evangelical souls in established Communions. Among the Lutherans Schmucker and Stauch are the only ones to merit praise for their piety. The former was a friend of Newcomer's, and the latter frequently stopped on his route through Hagerstown.[1] Newcomer attended the Ministerium session in Schmucker's church in 1815 and heard Helmuth, Walter, Shaefer, Lochman, and Mühlenberg preach. His narrative is too prosaic to lead one to believe he was much pleased.[2] Newcomer also appreciated the piety and friendship of John Stouch,[3] though the latter disappears from mention with mysterious suddenness.

So long as Antony Hautz was settled in Carlisle, the revivalists were assured of the coöperation and the hospitality of the Reformed Church.[4]

The greatest cordiality, however, was felt for the Methodists. Despite the disparity of language, the similarity of theology and religious technique drew these groups together. In the lay mind the differences between the two were neither real nor apparent, and these preachers were not infrequently called "Dutch Methodists."[5] Beginning with the initial friendship of Asbury and Schwab, the circle widened to include Otterbein, Boehm, Geeting, Newcomer, and Dreisbach. Following the consolidation of these independents into organizations and on until long after this period there were serious attempts to "ascertain whether any, and if any, what union could be effected" between themselves and the Methodists.

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[1] Newcomer, Journal, pp. 29, 77, 85, 179, 101, 213.
[2] Ibid., p. 234.
[3] Ibid., pp. 61, 59.
[4] Harbaugh, Lives, II. Newcomer, Journal, pp. 39, 41, 50.
[5] Miller, Federhoff, pp. 11, 14.

The independents and Methodists had much in common. Both preached universal atonement, free grace, and the absolute necessity of the new birth. The class system employed by the revivalists was of Methodist origin, distinctly so in the case of the Albright Brethren. They rubbed shoulders in class meetings, sacramental meetings, and campmeetings. When one group of revivalists gravitated toward organization in 1807 they called themselves "The Newly Formed Methodist Conference."[1] Two years later this same group adopted a discipline which was virtually a verbatim transcript of Roemer's translation of the Methodist Discipline ordered by Bishop Francis Asbury.

Meanwhile in 1802 Martin Boehm's name was entered on a local Methodist Church roll; his wife had earlier joined that church. Not long thereafter his oldest son, Henry, joined the Methodist Conference as an itinerant. Scarcely a year passed that did not show the presence of Otterbein, Boehm, or Newcomer at the Methodist annual conference. Indeed, it is no marvel that the lay mind dubbed the revivalists "Dutch Methodists."

The fraternal spirit of the revivalists is revealed in its depth in Newcomer's word that "When God converted my soul he gave me that love which enabled me to unite with all his true followers."

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[1]Orwig, Geschichte, p. 44.

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